

# BLACK EXCELLENCE

HBCUs - DO THE RIGHT THING!!

# SYNOPSIS

**BLACK EXCELLENCE: HBCUs Do the Right Thing** is a 6 episode docu-series exploring the profound impact Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) have had in advancing Black success.

We will explore the barriers placed in front of African-Americans to oppress their opportunities for higher education and the huge discrepancies in which the achievements of Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) receive recognition much more so than HBCUs and how it is impacting them financially.

It has left HBCUs with an identity crisis, causing them to struggle for government funding, national endowments, and corporate sponsorships. But HBCUs met that challenge, time and time again in business, politics, entertainment, sports, and conquered anyway.

Our series will celebrate their achievements by visiting numerous HBCUs and speaking to many prominent alumni; including CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, acclaimed entertainers, high ranking political figures, and legendary athletes. We will also interview high profiles individuals who did not attend HBCUs, but who have become powerful advocates and donors.

# EPISODE 1 - HBCU CENTRAL

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In 1865 there were 560 institutions of higher learning.

Only ONE, Cornell University, permitted African Americans to apply and attend.

**HBCUs** have long been an outstanding source of academic accomplishment and great pride for African American communities. They offer doctoral, masters, bachelors, and associate degree programs and play a critical role in ensuring that African American students and OTHERS receive a quality education. To some, the first HBCU comes down to one of two universities in Pennsylvania: Cheyney University founded in 1837 and Lincoln University founded in 1854. Graduates of both colleges believe their alma mater is the first.

No one can agree, but one topic we can agree on - HBCUs are underfunded and under-appreciated.

For example, in 1885 the founding of the Georgia School of Technology (now Georgia Tech) and the Atlanta University Center, a consortium of Clark Atlanta University, Morris Brown, Spelman College, Morehouse College, and the Morehouse School of Medicine, established Atlanta as a center for higher education.

Today, in the city of Atlanta, ONLY Georgia Tech College of Engineering continues to be nationally recognized as an elite engineering school and one of the top public institutions in the nation, despite HBCUs achieving the same academic success, against greater odds.

This will be one of many examples where HBCUs are not recognized nationwide, and therefore under-appreciated and left struggling for funding.



**Morehouse College**

# HBCU CENTRAL

The city of Atlanta is an epicenter for higher education. It is home to five historically black colleges and universities.



**Clark Atlanta University**



**Morehouse School  
of Medicine**

**Spelman College**



## THE HOST



Our narrator for this episode is Morehouse College graduate, **Samuel L. Jackson**.

**Morris Brown College**



### MOREHOUSE COLLEGE

Martin Luther King Jr.  
Martin Luther King Sr.  
Spike Lee  
Samuel L. Jackson  
John David Washington  
Brian Tyree Henry  
Raphael Warnock  
Shaun King  
Howard Thurman

### CLARK ATLANTA

Kenya Barris  
Kenny Leon  
Akon  
Louis T. Wright  
Bomani Jones  
Eva Pigford  
DJ Drama

### SPELMAN COLLEGE

Stacey Abrams  
Keshia Knight Pulliam  
Esther Rolle  
LaTanya Richardson  
Rolanda Watts  
Ada E. Brown  
Tati Gabrielle  
Bernice King

### MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE

Sommore  
Alfred Jenkins  
Donte Curry  
Hosea Williams

# PRODUCTS OF HBCU CENTRAL

In the city of Atlanta the academic shine  
should have never just been on Georgia Tech.

It should have been shared equally with  
all the HBCUs in Atlanta which also leads the way  
in academics and graduated the leader in the  
civil rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Morris Brown accomplished a feat that most thought impossible, and was awarded its accreditation after losing it in 2002.

In the past twenty years, the HBCU's enrollment dropped from 2,000 to less than 50, and after 120 years, the school's board of trustees recommended to shutter their doors for good.

But school president Kevin James disagreed and for the past three years fought to regain back the school's accreditation and evolve as an operational campus.

In 2021, the HBCU received accreditation candidacy confirming the institution was in compliance with the standards that the institution provides sound instruction and student services.

A year later the school is celebrating its reaccreditation and the school is once again eligible to apply for federal education funding that could go toward student financial aid and Pell Grants or on-campus housing.

**Morris Brown's comeback serves as a beacon of hope for smaller HBCUs struggling with finances and enrollment.**

# MORRIS BROWN CONQUERED ANYWAY!



# HBCU CENTRAL

We speak to several high profile graduates from the core five HBCUs to learn-



**SPIKE LEE**  
Morehouse College



**Brian Tyree Henry**  
Morehouse College



**JOHN DAVID WASHINGTON**  
Morehouse College



**STACY ABRAMS**  
Spelman College



**KEISHA KNIGHT PULLIAM**  
Spelman College



**KENYA BARRIS**  
Clark Atlanta University



**KENNY LEON**  
Clark Atlanta University



**SOMMORE**  
Morris Brown College



**NENE LEAKES**  
Morris Brown College



**AKON**  
Clark Atlanta University

**Morehouse** and **Spelman** served as the undergraduate institutions, and Atlanta University, now **Clarke Atlanta**, served as the graduate school, thereby providing the undergraduate institutions immediate access to graduate facilities in an era when Black students were denied entrance to southern research universities.

Spelman college was founded in 1881 by two white women, Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles, and was located in the basement of Friendship Baptist Church. By 1883, the school raised enough funds to build space on nine acres of land. John D. Rockefeller donated so much money that the school was named after his wife, Laura Spelman. The first Black woman to be on staff was Sophia Jones, M.D, in 1885. In 1987, Johnnetta B. Cole became the first Black female president of the college.

**Morris Brown** was the first educational institution in Georgia to be owned and operated entirely by African Americans and leased its first building from Atlanta University which is now a historical landmark.

# EPISODE 2 - BLACK GIRL MAGIC

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# DIFFERENT WORLDS

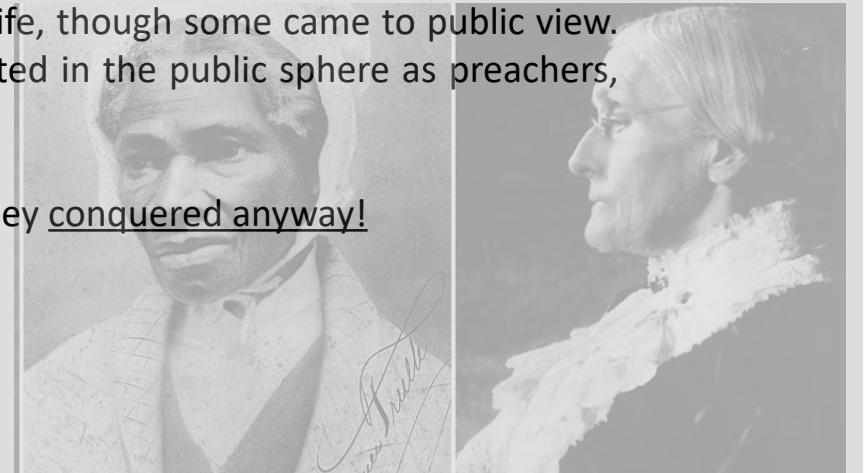
In America, in comparison to White women, Black women never stood equally with their female counterparts. In the early 19th century, White women had different experiences of life depending on what groups they were part of. A dominant ideology at the beginning of the 1800s was called **Republican Motherhood**: middle- and upper-class white women were expected to educate the young to be good citizens of the new country.

The other dominant ideology on gender roles at the time was separate spheres: Women were to rule the domestic sphere (home and raising children) while men operated in the public sphere (business, trade, government).

This ideology would have, if followed consistently, meant that White women were not part of the public sphere. However, there were a variety of ways White women participated in public life. Biblical injunctions against White women speaking in public discouraged many from that role, but some women became public speakers anyway.

Women of African descent who were enslaved usually had no public life. They were considered property and could be sold and raped with impunity by those who, under the law, owned them. Few participated in public life, though some came to public view. Many were not even recorded with a name in the records of the enslavers. A few participated in the public sphere as preachers, teachers, and writers.

**HBCUs** helped Black Women liberate themselves from this injustice through education and they conquered anyway!



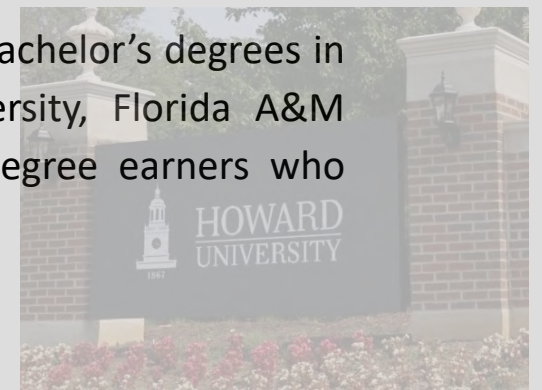
# RISING UP

The logo for Spelman College, featuring the name "Spelman College" in a blue, serif font.

For more than 150 years, HBCUs have been educating minorities, especially women, giving them economic opportunities and instilling great values. Not only have they consistently produced leaders in their communities and across the nation, but HBCUs today are consistently and affordably producing the leaders of the future. Despite limited access to resources during high school, students who choose to pursue their undergraduate degrees at Historically Black Colleges and Universities are welcomed by a nurturing environment that provides critical resources to overcome academic, social, and financial hurdles.

HBCUs produced 46 percent of black women who earned degrees in STEM disciplines between 1995 and 2004. HBCUs produced 25 percent of all bachelor's degrees in STEM fields earned by African Americans in 2012.

In 2014, black women represented the highest percentage of minority women who earned bachelor's degrees in computer sciences. HBCUs such as North Carolina A&T State University, Howard University, Florida A&M University, and Xavier University of Louisiana continue producing undergraduate STEM degree earners who pursue graduate degrees in their field.



Today we look at the HBCU student body makeup, and that there are only two all-women HBCUs in that number- Bennett College and Spelman College.

The percentage of female enrollment at HBCUs increased from 53 percent in 1976 to 63 percent in 2019.

Our narrator for this episode will be Academy Award nominated actress and Howard University alumnus **TARAJI P. HENSON**.

She will introduce us to powerful black women dominating the political, entertainment, business, and professional landscapes, and how they are making Black Girl Magic.



# POLITICS

**Kamala Harris**



Howard University  
Class of 1986

Kamala Harris is the first female vice president and the highest-ranking female official in U.S. history.

Stacey Abrams was the first female African American to win a gubernatorial nomination for a major political party.

We'll hear what they were told they were supposed to be - and how their HBCU changed that.

What obstacles they faced after leaving their HBCU due to their race and gender.

How the time at their school prepared them for those challenges and to make history.

**Stacey Abrams**



Spelman College  
Class of 1995

**Oprah Winfrey**



Tennessee State  
University  
Class of 1976

**Phylicia Rashad**



Howard University  
Class of 1970

# ENTERTAINMENT

Oprah Winfrey has been named one of the most influential people by Time Magazine  
**9 times**

Erykah Badu has **19** Grammy Awards, winning **4**

Anika Noni Rose has 2 Tony Award nomination and a win

Phylicia Rashad has 6 Emmy Award nominations

We'll discover what they believed life at an HBCU would be like compared to how it was.

The visions each woman had when they started their school and how it expanded.

How their time at an HBCU made them see that anything and everything is possible.

**Erykah Badu**



Grambling State  
University

**Anika Noni Rose**



Florida A&M University  
Class of 1994

# EPISODE 3 - HBCUs VS PWIs

## THE POWER OF SPORTS

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**1906 - Edwin Henderson formed the first African American athletic conference, the Interscholastic Athletic Association (I.S.A.A) which organized and promoted play between Black basketball teams along the Mid-Atlantic coast.**

**The NCAA was formally established the SAME YEAR as the I.S.A.A, by a group of leaders from Ivy Leagues. During this time, the NCAA excluded both Black athletes and HBCUs from participation.**

# THE DISPARITY



Despite hiring high profile coaches, increased NIL deals, high profile athletes considering and attending HBCUs, HBCUs are still crippled by the financial disparity between HBCUs and PWIs. **Stephen A. Smith** will discuss how HBCUs have always fought a losing economic battle to PWIs. That prior to the 1970's, HBCUs still attracted the best athletic talent to their programs, but let us tell you what happened.

## **FUNDING AND REVENUE**

PWIs generate much more total revenue each year from ticket sales, rights/licensing, and contributions, while HBCUs continue to lack financial support.

## **FACILITIES**

The difference in facilities at PWIs compared to HBCUs is a prime example of systemic racism that persists even within college athletics. Without the proper funding, HBCU facilities remain inferior.

## **EXPOSURE**

Fans attending games are one of the primary revenue resources for HBCUs, so less attention is gained without big time TV and radio contracts.

## **HBCUs Sports Were Not Prepared For Their Decline**

In the 1950's the NCAA started to secure television broadcasting rights and networks began to pay the NCAA millions of dollars to broadcast games. The early business model was largely exclusive to whites with HBCUs excluded to those same broadcasting — and money making— opportunities.

But as college athletics became more and more integrated, the top Black athlete numbers at HBCUs steadily declined. In each subsequent decade HBCU's power in the world of college athletics soon died off, and Black college athletes were funneled to PWIs.

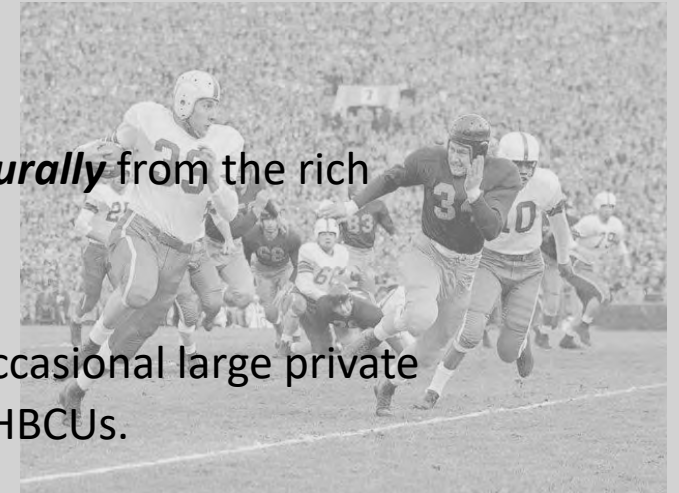
PWIs went from wholesale excluding Black athletes to selectively recruiting those who could economically benefit their institution. With the advancement of PWIs and their athletic programs, they became a more viable destination for many Black athletes till this day.

# FINANCIAL EXCLUSION



As a result, Black college athletes gained momentum athletically, but lost out **culturally** from the rich environment and support HBCUs offered.

Without regular television contracts, shares of major conference revenues, and occasional large private donations, participation in the highest levels of competition was not possible for HBCUs.



PWIs have since become a popular destination for Black athletes — with more funding, opportunities, and exposure. HBCUs remained at lower levels due to the Black athlete extraction that occurred, ultimately causing a damaging impact on the economic viability of HBCU athletics, still present today.

# DESPITE NOT BEING ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE, HOW DID HBCUs GET HERE ATHLETICALLY?



1912: The creation of the I.S.A.A conference allowed Black athletes to emerge alongside white conferences and led to creation of the HBCU conferences known today.

1912: The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) was founded and incorporated in the District of Columbia as the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

1913: The Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) was founded.

1920: The Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) was formed with six Texas Black colleges: Bishop College, Paul Quinn College, Prairie View A&M, Texas College and Wiley College.

1970: The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) was founded.



# Pre-Desegregation

Blacks championed the call to defeat desegregation, and when it came to fruition it had a negative effect on HBCU recruitment and athletics.

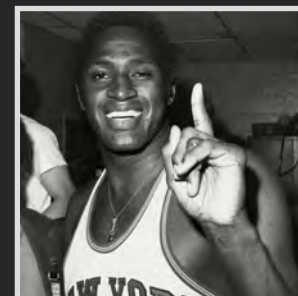
From 1947 to 1959, twelve HBCU players were drafted into the NBA. That number quadrupled in the 1960s, as professional scouts discovered HBCUs as new sources of talent.

Through montages and archival footage we will watch some of the greatest players to come out of HBCUs, such as NBA Hall of Famers **Sam Jones**, **Willis Reed**, **Earl Monroe** and **Bob Dandridge**.



**SAM JONES**  
North Carolina Central  
Drafted #8 in 1957

WON 10 NBA  
CHAMPIONSHIPS



**WILLIS REED**  
Grambling State University  
Drafted #8 in 1964

HALL OF FAME 1982



**EARL "THE PEARL" MONROE**  
Winston Salem State University  
Drafted #2 in 1967

HALL OF FAME 1990



**BOB DANDRIDGE**  
Norfolk State University  
Drafted #45 in 1969

HALL OF FAME 2021

## HBCUs MADE NFL LEGENDS

The world class talent attending HBCUs extended beyond the basketball arena. Many of the best football players started at an HBCU.

The two greatest football players of all time, **WALTER PAYTON** and **JERRY RICE**, along with **DOUG WILLIAMS**, the first Black Quarterback to win a Super Bowl, began playing at HBCU programs.



WALTER PAYTON  
Jackson State 1974

Retired as the NFL's leader  
in rushing yards -



Doug Williams  
Grambling State University  
1976

Super Bowl XXII MVP



JERRY RICE  
Mississippi Valley State

NFL's all-time leader in  
receptions, yards and TDs

# HBCU Hall of Famers

**There are 33 players in the NFL Hall of Fame who played at an HBCU**

**Willie Brown - Buck Buchanan - Willie Davis - Charlie Joiner - Lem Barney - Robert Brazile - Jackie Slater**

**Roosevelt Brown - Len Ford- Leroy Kelly - Willie Lanier- Harold Carmichael - Deacon Jones - Marion Motley - Donnie Shell**

**Mel Blount - Harry Carson - Aeneas Williams - Richard Dent - Claude Humphrey Michael Strahan - Winston Hill - Larry Little**

**John Stallworth - Emmitt Thomas - Bob Hayes - Rayfield Wright - Art Shell - Elvin Bethea - Ken Houston - Shannon Sharpe**



**Deacon Jones**  
South Carolina State University



**John Stallworth**  
Alabama A&M



**Bob Hayes**  
Florida A&M University



**Art Shell**  
Maryland-Eastern Shore



**Richard Dent**  
Tennessee State University



Deion Sanders  
Jackson State University  
Head Coach

## New Brand of Recruiters & The Transfer Portal are Leveling the Playing Field

Former PWI star athletes and high level coaches are leading the charge to bring back top talent to HBCUs.

**Deion Sanders** and **Eddie George** who played at Florida State and Ohio State, along with former NFL head coach **Hue Jackson**, are leading the programs of Jackson State University, Tennessee State University, and Grambling State University. They are changing the recruiting game.

Sanders disrupted the status quo by flipping **Travis Hunter**, the **No.1 overall** prospect in the 2022 recruiting class, from his alma mater and commit to Jackson State.

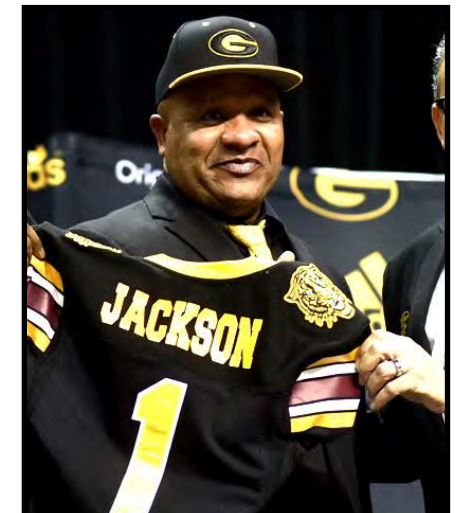
Hue Jackson has flipped 2 players, **Devin Bush** and **Donte Sparks**, from rival Southern University to Grambling.

And four star recruit QB **Demetrius Davis** is transferring from PWI Auburn to play for HBCU Alabama State.

Eddie George  
Tennessee State University  
Head Coach



Hue Jackson  
Grambling State University  
Head Coach



# EPISODE 4 - LISTEN TO THE BAND

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*A 2009 study found that 50.2-percent of current and former students along with faculty at HBCUs, listed the school's marching band as a **leading factor** in their decision to attend or work at their school.*



Our M.C. for this episode is Grammy and Oscar Award winning musician and Florida A&M University alumnus **Common**.

# HALFTIME MATTERS

HBCU marching bands operate as brand ambassadors for their universities and are fundamental in recruiting efforts. As some of the most visible off campus organizations, marching bands allow HBCUs to gain exposure and prestige for more than just academics.

ESPN learned of the POWER an HBCU marching band holds, the hard way. They were dragged through social media for cutting away from the performances of two HBCU Bands, **Jackson State** and **FAMU**, playing at halftime during a nationally televised Black College football game.

The game carried much significance, including the fact it was the first time FAMU's football team played a game in more than a year, after the school shut down because of the pandemic, and Jackson State edged out the win.

But that was beside the point for many viewers. Both schools are routinely credited for having the top bands, amplifying the excitement viewers had to watch their performances.

ESPN fixed this programming problem in the upcoming weeks by airing live the bands' halftime performances on ESPN+.

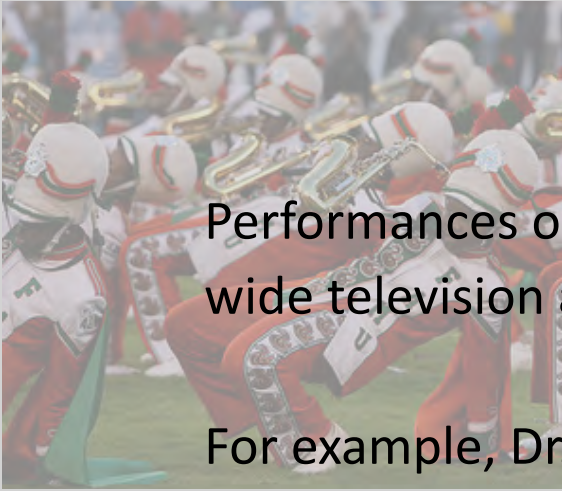


Jackson State University  
Marching Band



Florida A & M University  
Marching Band

# A BIGGER STAGE



Performances on regional and national stages provide opportunities for HBCUs to reach wide television and social media audiences.

For example, Dr. Foster grew the Marching "100" through televised Super Bowl performances and presidential inauguration parades.

Bethune-Cookman University's marching band participated in the 2018 Netflix documentary "Marching Orders," which highlighted the grueling process of auditioning and preparing for an HBCU marching band season. HBCU marching bands' ability to recruit students and represent schools is essential to these institutions' overall operation.



In 2018, Beyonce became the first black woman to headline the Coachella Musical Festival.

The show celebrated Black Excellence incorporating marching bands from several HBCUs.



The performance garnered over 3 million Youtube views, 1.1 million on Netflix and has become known as BEYCHELLA.



Common will bring us through the history and revolution of HBCU marching bands:

That in the 1940s, the high-energy “HBCU-style” emerged out of happenstance at a Florida A&M University practice.

How the spectator popularity of HBCU bands make football more than a game.

## THE FIFTH QUARTER

An exciting HBCU marching band tradition is known as the **Fifth Quarter**: a dueling performance between the two HBCU bands after a football game. The bands, or different sections of the bands, trade riffs and songs.

These events are a form of friendly, but serious, competition between alumni, fans, and band members. Each side analyzes and appreciates the technical and artistic skill of the opposition as the bands perform. The way each band finishes its performance is also unique — HBCU marching bands have their own traditions and often end concerts with songs important to that band and fan base.



# The Influence

We then speak to current members of HBCU marching bands to understand the impact it has on enrollment and luring students to attend their schools.

And to understand the effect that HBCUs bands such as The Grambling State University Tigers and The Jackson State University Sonic Boom have on PWIs Stanford, Florida State and Ohio State.



# EPIISODE 5 - GREEK LIFE

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*“Make a difference about something other than yourselves.”*

*-Toni Morrison Alpha Kappa Alpha*

# SUBVERTING EXCLUSION

Black sororities and fraternities were first founded as a way to subvert exclusion from mainstream collegiate institutions.

Now one of their members, KAMALA HARRIS, occupies one of the country's most powerful seats, in the nation's highest institution, from which women and largely people of color have been excluded since the nation's founding.

Black sororities and fraternities provide college activities and opportunities similar to those offered by white Greek organizations.



V.P. KAMALA HARRIS  
Alpha Kappa Alpha



Television host and Omega Psi Phi Incorporated member **Terence J.**, will discuss the friendships, parties, networking opportunities and community service of Black Greek members.

# DIVINE 9

There are 9 African American sororities and fraternities in the National Pan Hellenic Council.

They are collectively known as the — **Divine 9**.

Six of these institutions - ZETA PHI BETA, DELTA SIGMA THETA, ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA, PHI BETTA SIGMA, OMEGA PSI PHI, and IOTA PHI BETA were founded on an HBCU campus.

ΣΓΡ

ΔΣΘ

ΦΒΣ

ΑΦΑ

ΖΦΒ

ΑΚΑ

ΚΑΨ

ΩΨΦ

ΙΦΘ

# BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD

We speak to one member from each of the organizations born at a HBCU to learn-



Anthony Anderson  
Omega Psi Phi

Why they joined their organization?

The role that it has played in their life and careers.

What it means to them to be part of such a honored institution?

How their organization helps students and reaches out to the community?



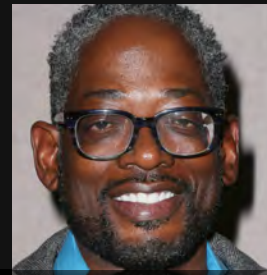
Emmitt Smith  
Phi Beta Sigma



Wanda Sykes  
Alpha Kappa Alpha



Keisha Knight Puliam  
Delta Sigma Theta



Terence C. Carson  
Iota Phi Beta



Sheryl Underwood  
Zeta Phi Beta



# This Why We Step!

Our cameras will then capture the popularity and excitement of a Step Show competition.

We will speak to students and dancers about why they feel step shows are an important part of Greek life. And even though it is rooted in the black culture, what it means to have “stepping” spread to the Latino and Asian cultures.

